



Shetland Equality Outcomes & Mainstreaming Report 2025-2029

April 2025

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1. Purpose of this Report

This report outlines NHS Shetland and Shetland Integrated Joint Board's plans for promoting equality from 2025 to 2029. IJB work is taken forward by the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), as the HSCP incorporates both NHS and local authority services. For information the [IJB report](#) for HSCP can be seen separately.

This report and the associate background work has been produced in partnership to support a collaborative approach. This report explains how fairness and inclusion will continue to be part of the NHS Shetland and the HSCP's daily work. By doing this, both bodies will meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, which is a law that protects people from discrimination and ensures everyone is treated fairly.

We plan to achieve this through equality outcomes, which are the goals NHS Shetland and Shetland HSCP aim to reach to support the General Duty. This includes eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities, and building positive relationships between different groups. By prioritising outcomes over objectives, this specific duty seeks to create real improvements in the lives of people who face discrimination and disadvantage.

This report also serves to meet the requirements for NHS Shetland to have an anti-racism plan as highlighted in DL23(2024) and the subsequent guidance that states "In recognising that racism is a public health issue across Scotland, we are asking our Health Boards to make more rapid progress in tackling the impacts of racism on colleagues, service users and on health outcomes"

NHS Shetland is committed to making health and care accessible by eliminating discrimination, promoting inclusion and ensuring human rights based approaches underpin all our functions and services.

Locally we have taken the view that rather than publish a separate anti-racism plan a more holistic approach to Equalities Mainstreaming that is more about recognising each individual being, intersectionality¹ in our local demographics and seeking to embed a culture of inclusivity will be more meaningful for staff and the organisation,.

We will monitor our deliverables and outcomes via our ADP and Staff Governance Action Plan along with reporting to the Board on our progress.

¹ "The term intersectionality is credited to Kimberlé Crenshaw, a critical race scholar, but there are multiple definitions. Intersectionality recognises that individuals belong to multiple categories or social groups e.g. gender, age, and may experience the effects of inequality and disadvantage similarly, differently, or uniquely shaped by where these categories intersect or interconnect (Scottish Government, 2022; Kirton and Green, 2021; Van Buren, 2020; Hopkins 2018). Intersectionality is not about the combined effects of different types of inequality, nor is it about a hierarchy of inequality or disadvantages experienced (Scottish Government, 2022; Kirkton and Green 2021; Hopkins, 2018). Van Buren (2020), Atewologun (2018), and Hopkins (2018) agree that key to intersectionality is the concept of power and who has it, who does not. This interacts and intersects at an individual and a socio structural level.

2. Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty, referred to as the 'General Equality Duty,' is set out in the Equality Act 2010. Under The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, public authorities are also covered by Specific Duties, which are designed to help listed authorities meet the General Equality Duty. NHS Shetland and Shetland IJB, as two legal entities, are covered by both the General and Specific equality duties.

2.1 The General Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The PSED also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.²

2.2 The Specific Duties

As well as the general duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) regulations set out additional specific duties that apply to Scottish public authorities listed in the Schedule to The Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, as amended.

NHS Shetland and Shetland IJB, as listed authorities, are subjected to the following Scottish specific duties, and are required to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review the equality impact of policies and practices
- gather, use and publish employee information
- use information on the characteristics of members or board members gathered by the Scottish Ministers
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish equal pay statements

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty-scotland.pdf>

- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible.³

2.3 The Governance Framework

The Staff Governance Standard explicitly requires us to ensure that colleagues are

- Treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued
- Provided with a continuously improving and safe working environment, promoting the health and wellbeing of staff, patients and the wider community
- Our Chief Executive Priorities around Partnership Working states that we will
- Support the Shetland Partnership
- Build and Strengthen relationships with key stakeholder and our community and
- Tackle inequalities in all of its formats

3. Development of this Report

This report and the associate background work has been developed in collaboration by the NHS Shetland Planning Team and the Council's Community Planning Team, to support a collaborative approach. The content of the Report has been developed by

The content of the Report has been developed by:

- Assessing progress in achieving the Outcomes set out in the NHS Shetland-Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming reports 2021 – 2025
- Workforce Monitoring Reports
- Equal Pay Reports
- Drawing on Profiles, for Each Protected Characteristic, which include:
 - Census Data
 - Research Reports
 - A Series of Focus Groups

See Appendix B Shetland Profiles for Protected Characteristics,

3.1 Focus Group Methodology

The design methodology was running Focus Groups for each of the Protected Characteristics, under the Equality Act, 2010.

The purpose was to enable people to share information about the key issues, challenges and opportunities individuals in the Shetland community face, with regards to discrimination, the advancement of equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

The ethos was, as much as possible, to reach people where they are, rather than bringing people together for a specific event. This was achieved by contacting and working with other services and community groups.

A guide was created for all Focus Groups, to ensure the method used was consistent. The guide was altered to be more user friendly for certain groups, such as altering text to be as inclusive,

³ [Public Sector Equality Duty: specific duties in Scotland | EHRC](#)

accessible and understandable as possible. Specific detail on the approach used for each Focus Group can be provided, on request.

4. Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming equality means integrating equality into the day-to-day working of the NHS and HSCP. This means taking equality into account, in the way the NHS and HSCP does its day-to-day work, structures and delivers its services, and operates as an employer and part of the community in Shetland.

Mainstreaming the equality duty has several benefits including:

- equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of the NHS and HSCP;
- the NHS and HSCP can demonstrate how it is promoting equality in the workforce and communities; and
- Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvements and better performance.

Mainstreaming equality is an integral part of the NHS Shetland Strategic Delivery Plan 2024-29, the IJB’s Strategic Plan 2025-28, and the Shetland Partnership Plan 2018-2028. In this new Equalities Outcomes and mainstreaming Report, we are actively working to embed our commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout our strategic priorities and activities. This work is relevant across all three strategic objectives of the NHS Shetland Strategic Delivery Plan:

- delivering excellent services
- supporting the building blocks of healthy communities
- creating the conditions for a sustainable organisation

Shetland HSCP and Shetland Partnership are both driven by the goal of reducing inequalities particularly around access to services and support.

Progress in achieving Outcomes, is set out in the Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021/25 Progress Report Update, see Appendix A.

4.1 Mainstreaming Outcomes 2025-2029

To support Mainstreaming, the NHS and HSCP will work towards the following strategic outcomes:

Mainstreaming Outcome 1		
Decision-makers and staff have access to good quality evidence (data and lived experience) to inform service improvement.		
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)		
Services are better delivered and accessed if their design is informed by service users, including those with Protected Characteristics. Participants of the Focus Groups were pleased to have their views listened too, with a keenness to continue to have conversations, as long as change will result. Services have a need for evidence, when monitoring, reviewing and re-designing services.		
Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)		
Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race

Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
What will we do?		By when?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create easy read versions of the Protected Characteristics Profiles and raise awareness of them. • Share and discuss the detailed findings from the Focus Groups, with NHS and HSCP services and Strategic Partnerships. • Work with Community Planning colleagues to Develop and expand the Focus Groups. 		<p>Publish online by end of May 2025 Ongoing</p> <p>By end of June 2025 / Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>
Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome		
NHS Shetland (working with Shetland Islands Council)		
General Equality Duty		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 		
How will we measure progress and know we've made a difference?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of discussions with services / strategic partnerships. • Collect case studies of examples of where evidence from the Profiles has used to change policy, service delivery and/or project delivery. 		

Mainstreaming Outcome 2		
Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) are a meaningful tool to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.		
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)		
To support and evidence that the NHS & HSCP is meeting its statutory duties. A mechanism to assess the impact of policy, service redesign and projects on those with Protected Characteristics.		
Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)		
Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race
Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
What will we do?		By when?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and publish EQIA templates with workforce • Plan and hold EQIA development session with NHS Board • Plan and hold EQIA workshop with team leads across NHS and HSCP to support use of tools • Provide ongoing support to teams across NHS and HSCP to undertake EQIAs. 		<p>By end of July 2025 By Autumn 2025</p> <p>By end 2025-26</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome		
NHS Shetland Shetland IJB		
General Equality Duty		

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equal opportunities between those who have a Protected Characteristic and those who do not.

How will we measure progress and know we've made a difference?

- Number of EQIA's completed each year.
- Feedback from workshops/development session
- Collect case studies of examples of where evidence from the Profiles has used to change policy, service delivery and/or project delivery.

5. Equality Outcomes

An equality outcome is a result that NHS and HSCP aims to achieve to further one or more of the needs mentioned in the General Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

5.1 Equality Outcomes 2025 – 2029

These equality outcomes have been developed to address specific issues, for people with particular Protected Characteristics, and relate to one or more of the legal entities:

Equality Outcome 1		
We support our communities to be open minded and compassionate.		
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)		
<p>There is a need for increased understanding to reduce stigma, so people are able to feel respected and not judged in their community. For example, feedback from Focus Groups demonstrated the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger people being able to socialise in groups without fear of judgement and labelling; • Older people to feel respected and treated with kindness; • Disabled people to feel included in the community and not judged by their disability; • Those who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process to reassign sex, to be treated respectfully and accepted; • People who are not originally from Shetland, to feel they are treated equally and fairly to those born in Shetland; • Religious people and people who have beliefs to feel they are treated respectfully and feel safe in the community; • Women to access support in relation to domestic abuse or reporting sexual violence without being judged; • Women to feel safe in public spaces; and • Individuals with a particular sexual orientation feel secure within the community, knowing they and report hate crimes if necessary. <p>The rationale for this outcome is informed by data from local profiles, research findings, and insights gathered from local focus groups, per relevant protected characteristic.</p>		
Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)		
Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Race	Religion or Belief	Sex
Sexual Orientation		
What will we do?	By when?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training opportunities to NHS and HSCP teams on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equality, diversity and inclusion ○ Being trauma-informed and delivering trauma-informed services. • Effective Participation in Shetland Partnership improvement projects, particularly Compassionate Shetland and Person-Centred Shetland • Support Shetland Partnership development and delivery of Shetland-wide communications campaign designed to encourage to consider our own stigma, stereotypes and misjudgements in the community. • Work with young people through the Shetland Children’s Partnership and Stigma Live Working Group, so they can encourage public spaces, such as public buildings and cafes, to welcome young people, and make our services more CYP friendly. • NHS Shetland Director of Human Resources and Support Services is part of the national group working on the Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill around review panel composition and training 	<p>From October 2025.</p> <p>Delivered through Trauma-Informed Implementation Plan.</p> <p>Delivered through Compassionate Shetland,</p> <p>A Shetland Partnership Delivery Plan Improvement Project. December 2025.</p> <p>End 2025-26,</p>
Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome	
NHS Shetland Shetland IJB	
General Equality Duty	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. • Foster good relations between people who have a Protected Characteristic and those who do not. 	
How will we measure progress and know we’ve made a difference?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training sessions delivered, to employees and the wider community • Attendance at training sessions • Survey to monitor impact of training sessions • Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Compassionate Shetland Project 	

Equality Outcome 2
People have access to inclusive and accessible communication methods and resources
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)
<p>Improving the clarity and accessibility of communication we can ensure that everyone has access to the information they need, when they need it and in a way that suits their needs. By ensuring our communications and information is clear, we can provide clarity, ensuring the meaning is understood, reducing the potential for confusion and misinterpretations. By providing a variety of options we can provide accessibility for various needs, this will assist to overcome challenges in communication; such as language barriers, cognitive differences, sensory impairments, digital skills and digital connections</p>

(including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver and TalkBack)	
We've also made the website text as simple as possible to understand.”	
Broaden our communication channels with service users and the general public; so that we offer a variety of ways to provide feedback and to find out more about our services.	
Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome	
NHS Shetland Shetland IJB	
General Equality Duty	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not. 	
How will we measure progress and know we've made a difference?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility audits to ensure digital compliance • Progress of Easy Read project, and documents available. • Language Line usage statistics quarterly • Feedback including Health and Care Experience survey, focus groups, complaints and compliments 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options how systems might capture adjustments provided to staff 	

Equality Outcome 3	
People in Shetland do not experience race-related health inequalities.	
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)	
<p>There is strong national and global evidence about race-related inequalities in access to and outcomes of healthcare. Due to small representation of global majority people in Shetland population we are unlikely to see local trends to act on, and consequently disadvantage may be hidden.</p> <p>The rationale for this outcome is informed by national data, it is recognised that due to profile of local population (as per race profile) it is challenging to understand and local specific trends or challenges due to small numbers accessing services. However it is reasonable to assume people in Shetland are likely to experience similar, if not increased, challenges, and there is unlikely to be any harm resulting from acting on this assumption.</p> <p>There is a national requirement to progress an “anti-racism plan” within the NHS based on the national evidence.</p>	
Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)	
Race	
What will we do?	By when?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Directors will have an equality objective 	May 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS Shetland and HSCP will share and support discussion of PHS commissioned data review of Race related health inequalities in Scotland NHS Shetland will explore barriers and challenges for local staff related to racism, utilising learning from PHS workforce survey Promote and support access to learning resources around equality and diversity and racism particularly 	<p>Summer 2025 (on publication)</p> <p>April 2026 -</p> <p>When these resources became available – ongoing</p>
Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome	
NHS Shetland	
General Equality Duty	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not; and Foster good relations between people who share a Protected Characteristic and those who do not. 	
How will we measure progress and know we've made a difference?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Equality & Diversity e-learning (current 64% of workforce) Inclusion of relevant anti-racism planning in NHS Shetland Learning Zone on TURAS Directors equality objectives Engagement with shared materials & feedback from team meetings 	

Equality Outcome 4		
Our workforce is open-minded and compassionate.		
Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)		
<p>Building on evidence from focus groups, community engagement events and previous “whistleblowing” awareness weeks we understand there are challenges around variation in approach and interpretation of policy across our organisation, and that there could be improvement in consistency of compassionate approach to service users, patients, families and colleagues.</p> <p>The rationale for this outcome is informed by data from local profiles, research findings, and insights gathered from local focus groups, per relevant protected characteristic.</p>		
Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)		
Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage & Civil Partnership	Pregnancy & Maternity	Race
Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
What will we do?		By when?
<p>NHS Shetland will embed a culture of inclusiveness, openness, transparency and respect across the organisation, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering anti-racism training to staff Positively seek and promote the role of the Confidential Contact to a more diverse staff group Establish and Support Staff Networks – EDI Champions Progress work on NHS Shetland culture and values as per Chief Executive’s objectives 		To be established in L&OD work plans across 2025 -2029

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seek to reduce stigmatisation of disability within the work-place by promoting understanding and use of inclusive language, including sharing and promoting relevant available resources with staff’. • NHS Shetland follows the Once for Scotland Policies around Supporting the Work Life Balance Policies which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parental leave ○ Special Leave ○ Shared Maternity and Adoption Leave ○ Maternity Leave ○ Breastfeeding ○ Adopting, Fostering and Kinship ○ Career Break ○ Retirement (including Retire and Return) ○ Flexibly working ○ Flexible Work Location ○ New Parent Support ○ Promote understanding of national Bullying and Harassment Policy 	<p>Monitoring to be captured in annual workforce report 2026 and ongoing</p>
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Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome

NHS Shetland
Shetland IJB

General Equality Duty

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

How will we measure progress and know we’ve made a difference?

- Monitoring Staff Survey Outcomes
- Engagement with Culture and Values work
- Appropriate implementation of once-for-Scotland HR Policies locally – review with managers and workforce / audit to evaluate if policies are applied consistently and fairly
- Review of whistleblowing complaints and outcomes
- Review of workplace adjustments to support staff in / return to work

Equality Outcome 5

Adults with Learning Disabilities are to access and use the health and care services they need, and ensure these services take into account their individual needs, wishes and decisions.

Why do this? (i.e. Rationale)

People with Learning Disabilities can experience challenges when trying to access health and care services; the person may find it challenging to communicate their health concerns, health decisions and wishes. This can mean that symptoms could be overlooked, and that those providing health and care, may not be aware of the person’s needs or desires. By ensuring

<p>people receive appropriate support and care at the right time we can empower the person and improve a person's health outcomes.</p> <p>This rationale is drawn from local focus group evidence, as well as national evidence around inequalities in health outcomes for people with learning disabilities.</p>	
<p>Who does this impact? (i.e. which Protected Characteristic)</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	
<p>What will we do?</p>	<p>By when?</p>
<p>Develop Annual Learning Disability health checks; these will allow for monitoring and reviewing of health problems for individual's; which can assist those who struggle to communicate health concerns and provide earlier access to health, care and prevention services.</p>	<p>End 2025-26</p>
<p>Use an Annual Learning Disabilities Health Check App that provide a function to enable individuals to record and communicate their health and needs with health professionals.</p>	<p>End 2025-26</p>
<p>Take a person centred approach to care planning; ensuring the person's views are acknowledged, recorded and considered when planning support.</p>	<p>Ongoing/continuous goal</p>
<p>Develop accessible forms of disability information and advice documents, such as Easy Read.</p>	<p>Ongoing/continuous goal</p>
<p>Work with our Partners including our third sector partners to develop local support and services.</p>	<p>Ongoing/continuous goal</p>
<p>Legal Entities with Individual Responsibility for this Outcome</p>	
<p>NHS Shetland Shetland IJB</p>	
<p>General Equality Duty</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not. 	
<p>How will we measure progress and know we've made a difference?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of LD Health Checks (number of) • Development and use of app • Development of documents in easy read and other accessible formats • User feedback 	

6. Monitoring and Review

We will continue to use a Human Rights based approach throughout implementation of the Report, by using the Panel Principles in practice. PANEL stands for Participation, Authority, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and Legality.

We will:

- Involve those with lived experience to participate in decision-making processes that affect them (P);
- Establish an accountability framework to ensure duty bearers uphold their obligations towards individuals with protected characteristics (A);
- Ensure that all forms of discrimination is prohibited, prevented and eliminated, particularly towards those with protected characteristics (N);
- Support and empower those with protected characteristics to participate in future focus groups and the implementation of the Report (E);
- Ensure that all our approaches are grounded through legal rights, as it is our duty to help people have their rights fulfilled (L).

Shetland's Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming progress will be reviewed every four years, as required by the Scottish specific duties on the Council as a listed body. We will publish a progress report every two years detailing achievements and timescales of projected outcomes.



[Appendix A: Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2023/25](#)

[Appendix B: Shetland Protected Characteristics Profiles](#)